

# ***The Kite Runner* Web Quest**

## **Introduction**

Just as our own cultural context creates our perception of the world around us, so too are author's shaped by their historical and cultural contexts. To gain a better understanding of *The Kite Runner*, you will complete an online webquest to establish background knowledge about Afghan culture and historical context.

## **Task**

**Research:** You will engage in online research about a particular topic relating to Afghan culture. Your group will be assigned a topic from the list below:

1. **History, Politics, and Geography -**
2. **Religion and faith -**
3. **Daily life (Dress/Food/Recreation/Economy) -**
4. **Women in Society -**
5. **Tribal relationships -**

**Assignment:** You will complete the readings online today, and gather information under the guiding questions I provided. You will answer the questions in a Google doc before putting them into a PowerPoint. You should NOT begin creating the presentation until you have finished your research and shared your final answers with me in your Google Doc. You will have one additional day to work on the presentation.

**Present:** You and your group will then have class time in the computer lab to compile your information into a PowerPoint that will be presented to the class. We will have two days in the lab, with presentations the following day. The **PowerPoint** must contain **AT LEAST one slide per question, and at least three images per slide.** Do not just copy and paste answers - make bullet points with clear information.

**Quiz:** Your group will be responsible for submitting three quiz questions relating to your topic. (Students must be able to answer correctly based on the information you present)

**#1 - History, Politics, & Geography - Answer the following questions thoroughly in a Google document as you research. Make sure your answers are complete and detailed. Keep track of which site you get the information from for each question. You will not begin to create the PowerPoint until ALL research is complete and answered in the Google doc.**

1. Make a general statement about Afghan history. Has it been good? Bad? Both? Has it been riddled with war or was it peaceful at one time? Make sure the class understands what the country has been through.

2. Summarize Afghan history since 1930, highlighting important events. You should include some of the following information:

- What happens in 1921?
- What happens in 1933?
- Who does Gen. Mohammed Daoud Khan make an alliance with? Why?
- 1973 was a pivotal point in Afghanistan's history. Why?
- Why does Osama shift his focus from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1988?
- In 1992 Afghanistan endures yet another coup. Which group takes over this time? What are the problems with this group?
- Why do most Afghans believe the Taliban takeover in 1993 is a good thing at first?
- Why do more than a million Afghans flee to Pakistan between the years of 1995 – 1999?
- What was America's answer to the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001?

3. What trends do you see in history?

4. What do these suggest about life for the average citizen?

5. Who/what is the Taliban? Give a detailed description. What was their "promise"?

6. What sorts of rules has the Taliban inflicted upon Afghan citizens?

**Try the websites below and feel free to consult other credible sites as well.**

**Basic cultural overview:** <http://www.everyculture.com/A-Bo/Afghanistan.html>

**Historical overview:** <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/world/afghanistan.html>

**The Taliban:** <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11451718>

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**#2 - Religion and faith - Answer the following questions thoroughly in a Google document as you research. Make sure your answers are complete and detailed. Keep track of which site you get the information from for each question. You will not begin to create the PowerPoint until ALL research is complete and answered in the Google doc.**

1. What are the differences between Sunni vs. Shiite Islam?
2. How is Islam integral to Afghan culture?
3. What are the basic tenets of Islam?
4. What other religions have similar beliefs?
5. Why do you think these religions, if they are so similar, seem to have difficulty getting along?

**Try the websites below and feel free to consult other credible sites as well.**

**Basic cultural overview:** <http://www.everyculture.com/A-Bo/Afghanistan.html>

**Difference between Sunni and Shiite:** <http://m.neatorama.com/2007/03/13/whats-the-difference-shia-vs-sunni/>

**Overview of Islam:** [http://www.themodernreligion.com/basic/basic\\_what.htm#believe](http://www.themodernreligion.com/basic/basic_what.htm#believe)

**Thorough explanation of Islam with links to lots of helpful sites:** <http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/index.htm>

**Prohibitions and Obligations of Islam:** <https://sites.google.com/a/ncps-k12.org/ms-magnan-s-english-classes/home/voices-of-the-world/kite-runner-webquest/prohibitions-and-obligations-of-islam>

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**#3 - Daily life (Dress/Food/Recreation/Economy) - Answer the following questions thoroughly in a Google document as you research. Make sure your answers are complete and detailed. Keep track of which site you get the information from for each question. You will not begin to create the PowerPoint until ALL research is complete and answered in the Google doc.**

1. What is the typical dress of Afghan men and women?

2. What does traditional Afghan clothing suggest about cultural values?
3. What is Kite-Running?
4. Describe the Afghan economy. What are its current challenges? Why?
5. What are the Opium Wars?

**Try the websites below and feel free to consult other credible sites as well.**

**Basic cultural overview** - <http://www.everyculture.com/A-Bo/Afghanistan.html>

**Dress code laws since the Taliban** - <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/apr/04/afghanistan-taliban-wedding-dress-code>

**Overview of Pashtun culture including clothing description** - <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Afghanistan-to-Bosnia-Herzegovina/Pashtun.html>

**Afghan food** - <http://afghanistan.saarctourism.org/food.html>

**Kite Running** - <http://www.afghana.com/Entertainment/Gudiparanbazi.htm>

**Brief economic overview** - <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/world/afghanistan.html>

**Fighting the Opium Wars** - <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/02/opium-wars/draper-text>

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**#4 - Women in Society - Answer the following questions thoroughly in a Google document as you research. Make sure your answers are complete and detailed. Keep track of which site you get the information from for each question. You will not begin to create the PowerPoint until ALL research is complete and answered in the Google doc.**

1. How does the Taliban control the behavior of women? What are some of their rules?
2. How have things changed/stayed the same for women since the Taliban lost power?
3. Explore how women's role in society has developed in the last forty years.
4. What challenges do modern Afghan women encounter? How are these similar/different to their mothers/the women who lived before them?

**Try the websites below and feel free to consult other credible sites as well.**

**Afghanistan Women:** <http://www.rawa.org/nanji.htm> - (the home site, [www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org) has a lot of information as well)

**Taliban Rules & Restrictions on Women** - <http://www.rawa.org/rules.htm>

**National Geographic overview with photo gallery and linked video** - <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/12/afghan-women/rubin-text>

**Women under Taliban Threat - TIME Photo Essay** - <http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,2007161,00.html>

**Associated article with preceding photo essay-** <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2007407,00.html> (Also see video on left)

**Afghan women fear for the future** - <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/feb/04/afghan-women-fears-for-future>

**Afghan Women Soar to New Heights** - [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_71148.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_71148.htm)

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**#5 - Tribal relationships and Family - Answer the following questions thoroughly in a Google document as you research. Make sure your answers are complete and detailed. Keep track of which site you get the information from for each question. You will not begin to create the PowerPoint until ALL research is complete and answered in the Google doc.**

1. What does the word "Afghan" describe?
2. What role do tribes play in Afghan culture? Family?
3. Who/what are the Pashtuns?
4. On what cultural values does the Pashtunwali code place most importance?
5. What does it mean to be an outsider in Afghan society? Why are people excluded? What does this exclusion look like?
6. What is a Hazara? What is their ethnicity? What is their religious practice? What are they known for? How are they set apart from others in their appearance?

Describe the relationship between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras.

**Try the websites below and feel free to consult other credible sites as well.**

**Basic cultural overview** - <http://www.everyculture.com/A-Bo/Afghanistan.html>

**Pashtun tribal structure** [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/31/weekinreview/13rohde.html?scp=1&sq=tribes%20afghan&st=cse&\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/31/weekinreview/13rohde.html?scp=1&sq=tribes%20afghan&st=cse&_r=1&)

**Pashtunwali code** - <http://afghanland.com/culture/pashtunwali.html>

**Honour among them: Pashtunwali v. Radical Islam** - [http://www.economist.com/node/8345531?story\\_id=8345531](http://www.economist.com/node/8345531?story_id=8345531)

**National Geographic article and photo gallery on "Afghanistan's Outsiders," the Hazara** -

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/02/afghanistan-hazara/phil-zabriskie-text>

**Relationship between Pashtun and Hazara in The Kite Runner** - <http://foryou1000timesover.blogspot.com/2008/04/pashtuns-and-hazaras.html>

## Evaluation

This webquest will be worth 80 points. You will be graded on:

- Content (20 pts): Includes the accuracy of your information and your **thoroughness** in addressing all of the guiding questions.
- Presentation (40 pts): Includes all group members participating and having speaking time during the presentation. Presentation is prepared with text and visuals, any quoted information is accurately cited. Presentation has at least three images per slide and answers the guiding questions thoroughly.
- Class Participation (10 pts): You are on task and focused during the class time, reading the articles and collaborating with your group members.
- Quiz Questions (10 pts): group must submit three quiz questions.

## Conclusion

After completing this project and we begin talking about *The Kite Runner*, you will be better equipped to visualize the culture in which the story takes place and understand the religious and societal forces that shape the lives of the characters.